

Islamic art



General characteristics

- Islamic art is especially famous for its architecture.
- There are very few paintings and sculptures, because the Koran did not allow the representation of Muhammad, Allah, people or animals.
- However, islamic art is very fine.

Representative buildings

The most important buildings were:

- **Palaces** (for the caliphs)
- **Mosques** (temples for praying)

Palaces



They usually had gardens and fountains. This courtyard is the **Patio de los Leones** of the Alhambra (Granada)

Palaces

And these gardens
are the **Generalife**
gardens, also in
Granada



Palaces

Palaces consisted of two areas:

- **Public area** (used for welcoming the ambassadors who went to visit the caliph)
- **Private area** (the residence area of the caliph and his family)

Mosques



Mosques were the buildings for praying in public, especially on Fridays.

This is the **umayyad mosque of Damascus**.

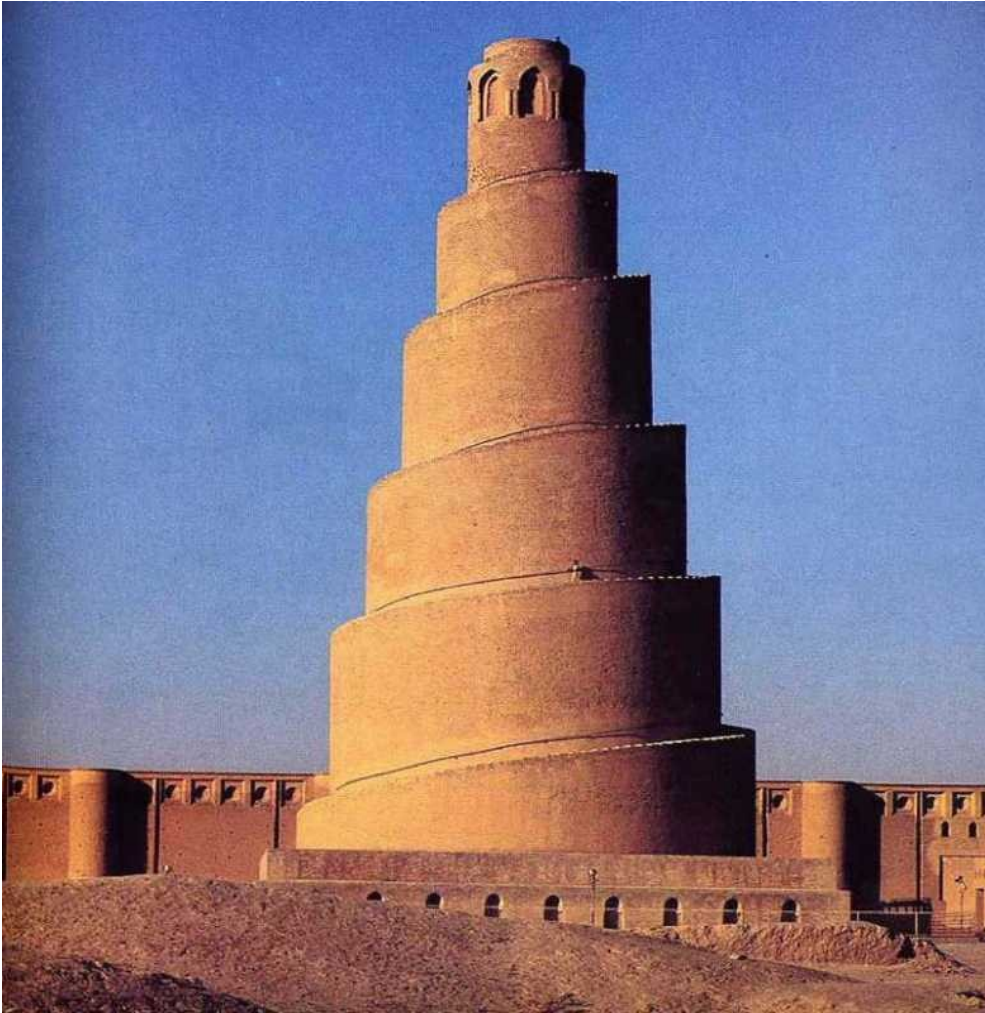
Parts of a mosque



The muezzin called to prayer from the **minaret**.

The **Giralda** in Seville was the **minaret** of the old mosque. The mosque was destroyed, and now the plant is occupied by the catholic gothic cathedral.

Parts of a mosque



Some **minarets** had funny shapes. This one is heliocidal, and it's in **Samarra** (Irak)

Parts of a mosque



After going through a door, we find a **courtyard** or **patio**. There is an **ablution fountain** which is used for ritual washing and spiritual purification before prayer.

Parts of a mosque



The **prayer hall** is a covered area with columns. Muslims pray here.

This is the interior of the **Córdoba mosque**.

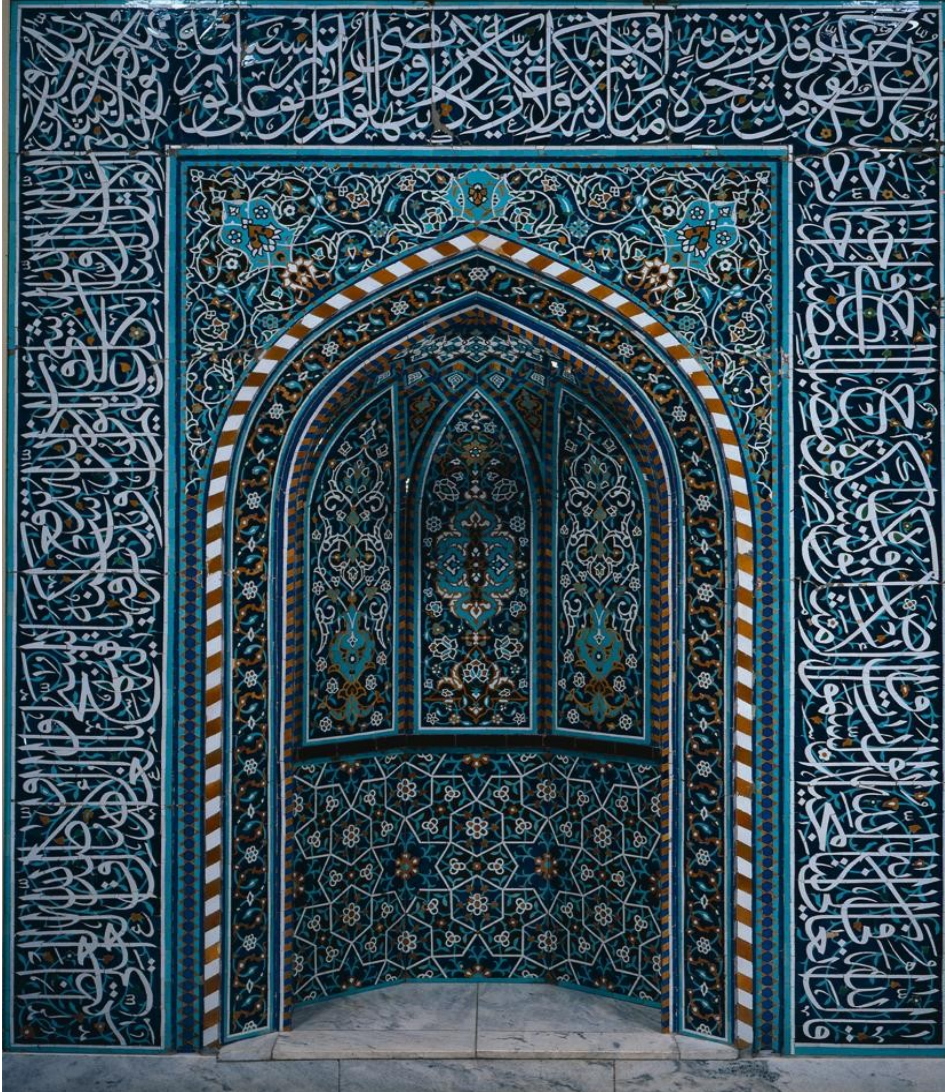
Parts of a mosque



The **qibla** is the wall muslims face when they pray.

The **qibla** is orientated towards the holy city of Mecca.

Parts of a mosque



The **mihrab** is a small niche in the qibla where the **Koran** is kept.

Parts of a mosque



The **mimbar** or pulpit.
The imam (the muslim priest) leads prayers from here.

Pics of a few important mosques

Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem



Mosque of Cairo, Egypt



Cordoba mosque, Spain



Blue mosque, Istanbul



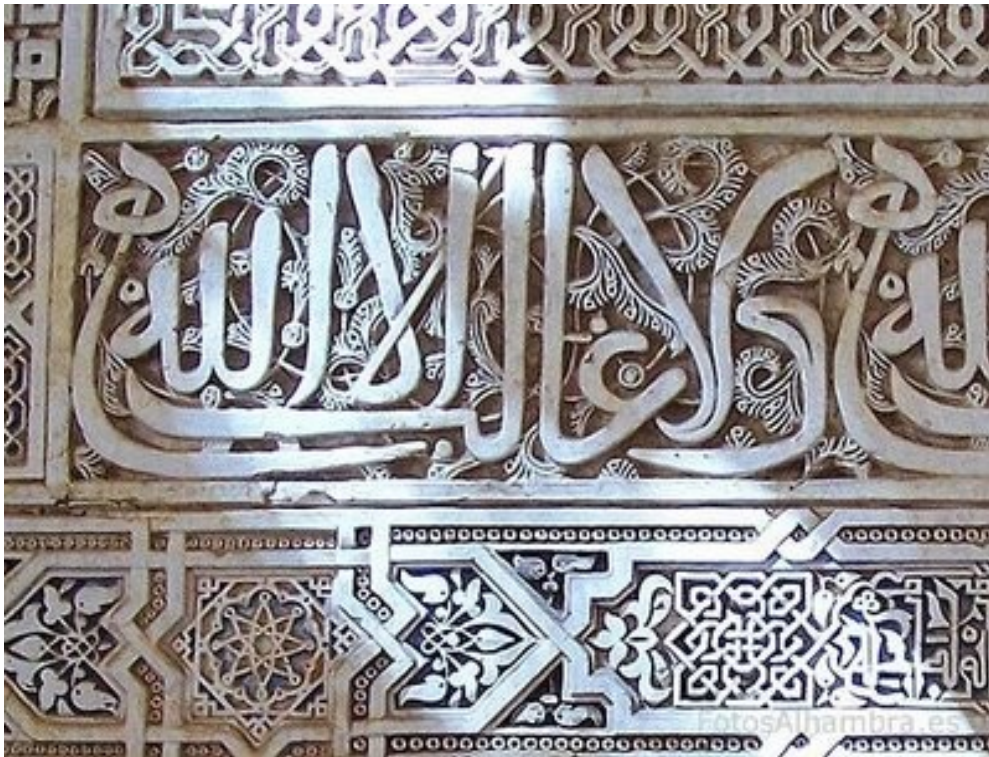
A summary of the parts of a mosque

- **Mimbar**
- **Minaret**
- **Courtyard (with an ablution fountain)**
- **Prayer hall**
- **Quibla**
- **Mihrab**

Decoration of islamic buildings

The interiors of islamic buildings
were richly decorated

Decoration



- Muslims used **arabic calligraphy** symbols as decoration.
- Usually, they sculpted verses from the Koran.

Callygraphy decoration



Decoration



They also decorated the walls with beautiful vegetal designs called **ataurique**.

Decoration

Or geometric designs



Decoration

- Sometimes, the materials they used were not very rich: simple bricks, plaster, etc.
- But they also used noble materials, like glazed tiles or hard wood like oak or birch (especially for the mimbars).

Decoration (glazed tiles)



Archs

Different types of archs



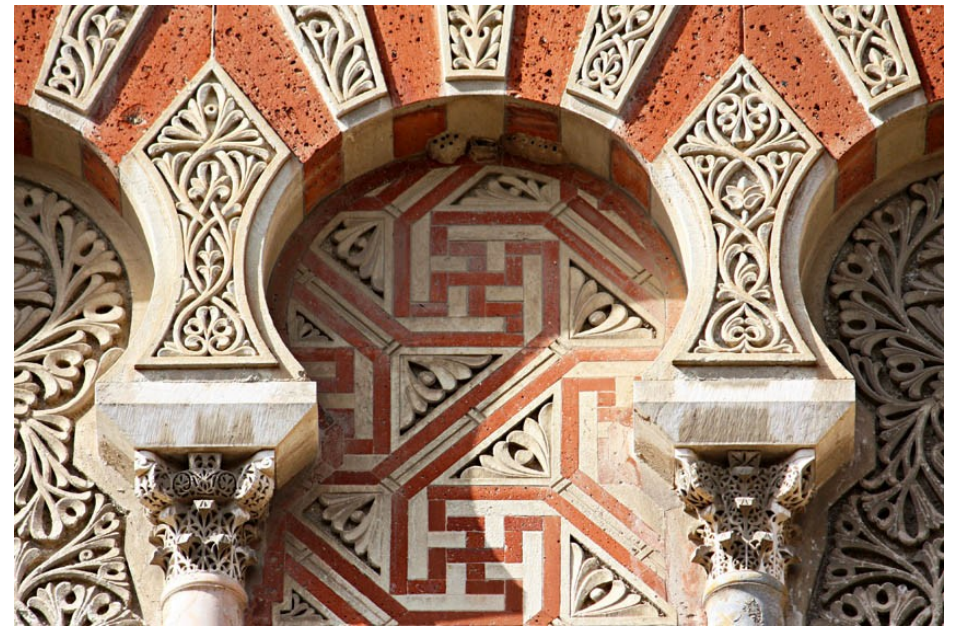
Archs



- Lobulated arch

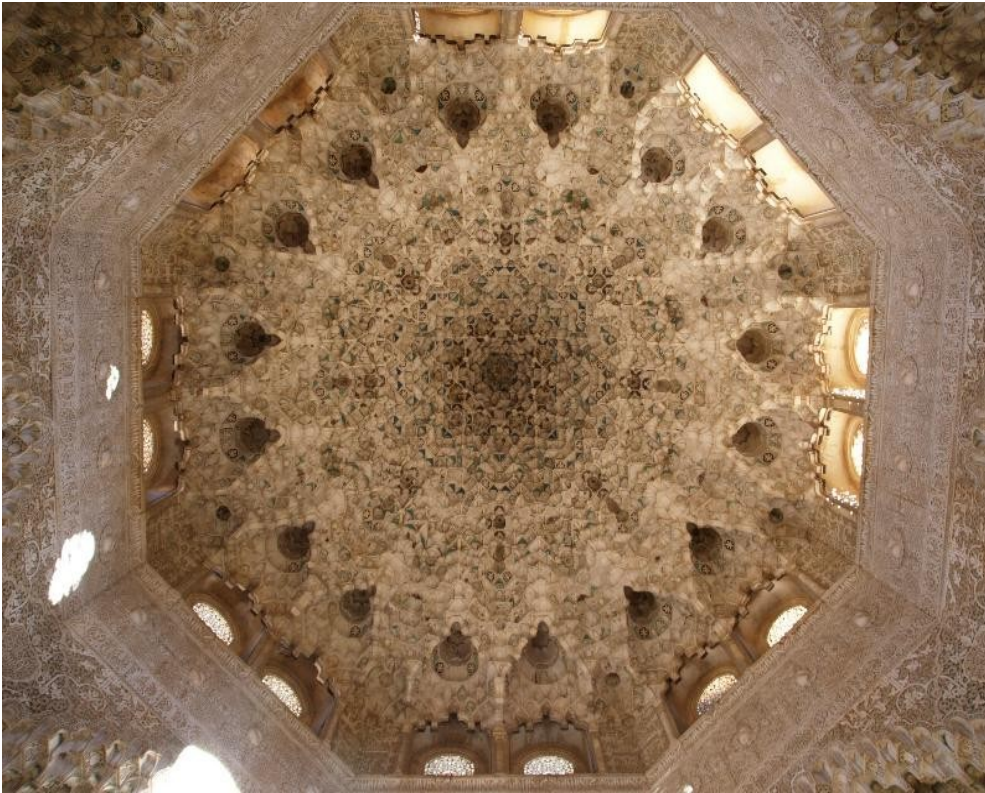
Archs

A **horseshoe arch**, the most typical islamic arch.



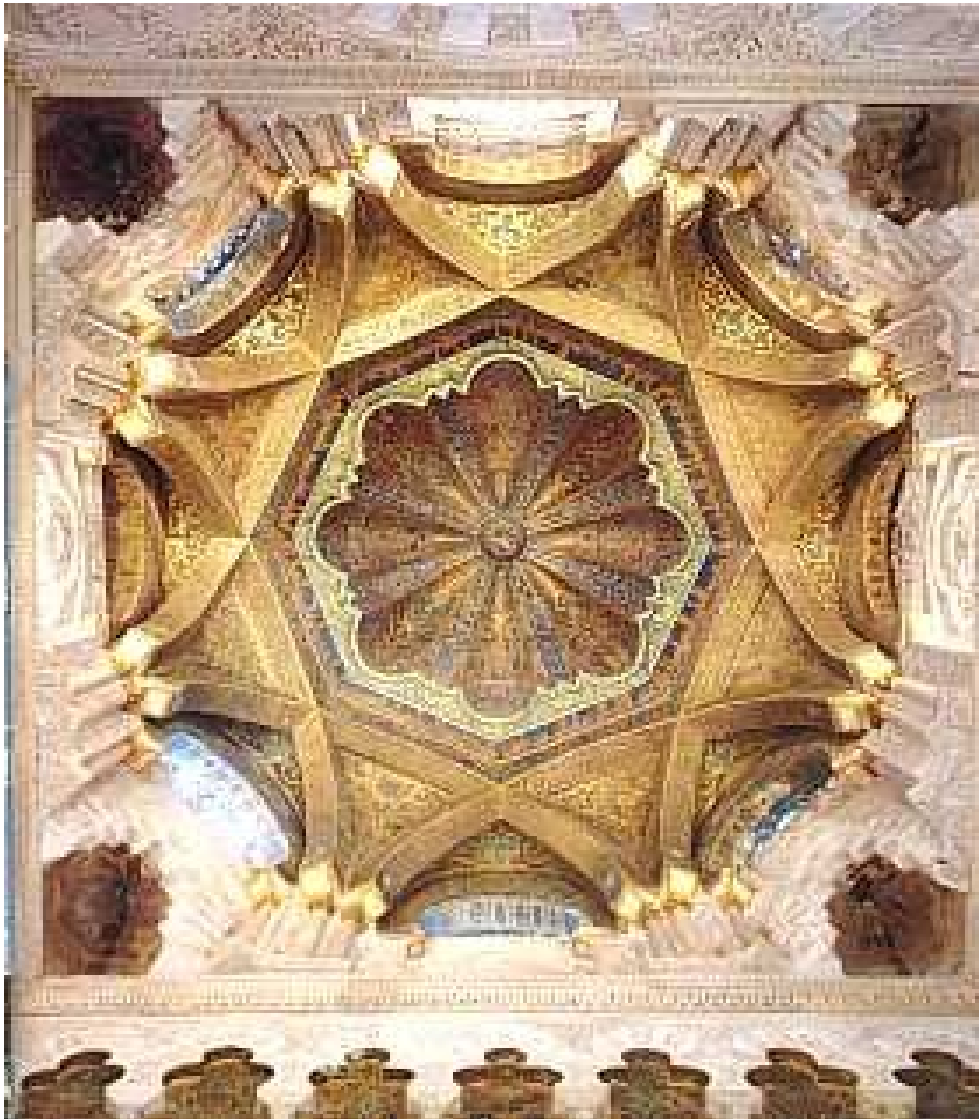
Domes

Domes



- **Mocárabes** (as if they were forming stalactites)

Domes



- Caliphal crossing dome.